



News Release

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1 in 7 Utahns Struggle with Arthritis and a 2nd Chronic Condition

(Salt Lake City, UT) – About 1 in 5 Utah adults have doctor-diagnosed arthritis. Now, a new Utah Department of Health (UDOH) report shows many of them also have other conditions that add to their health care challenges.

The Utah Arthritis Program (UAP) study, *Arthritis and Other Co-morbid Conditions Among Adults in Utah*, examines the co-existence of arthritis and seven other chronic conditions: asthma, angina/coronary heart disease, high blood pressure, heart attack, stroke, high cholesterol, and diabetes. The study found that nearly two-thirds (62.9%) of Utahns with arthritis also had at least one of the other chronic conditions. The report uses data from the 2007 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System – a phone survey that asks Utahns to report their health status and behaviors.

“The study is important because we tend to get treatment for a single condition and rarely focus on the issue of multiple diseases,” says Arthritis Program Manager Nicole Bissonette, MPH.

“Sometimes patients with diabetes or heart disease are told to exercise as a way to help manage their condition,” adds Bissonette. “But patients who also have arthritis may be in too much pain to comply with an exercise plan unless they find one specifically designed for people with arthritis. So considering the whole person and coming up with a comprehensive plan is essential to creating a program people can stick with.”

The UAP is helping communities across the state offer exercise and educational courses for people with arthritis and other chronic conditions. The newest program, the Chronic Disease Self Management Program (CDSMP) (known at some Senior Citizen Centers as *Living Well with Chronic Conditions*) is currently being offered in Salt Lake County

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facilities and could be helpful to the 13.8% of Utahns who have arthritis and at least one other chronic condition. CDSMP is a six-week, classroom-based course that teaches participants how to manage one or more chronic diseases. The UAP has plans to add CDSMP courses in the to Bear River Health District and in Davis, Utah, Wasatch, and Summit Counties in the coming year.

“We are anxious to take CDSMP and our other evidence-based programs across the state and are always seeking partners. We are even able to offer small grants to organizations that need startup funds,” says Bissonette.

Interested parties should contact the UAP at 801-538-9458.

For the full report, *Arthritis and Other Co-morbid Conditions Among Adults in Utah*, and a list of current evidence-based classes, visit the Utah Arthritis Program’s home page at (<http://health.utah.gov/arthritis/>).

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The mission of the Utah Department of Health is to protect the public's health through preventing avoidable illness, injury, disability and premature death, assuring access to affordable, quality health care, and promoting healthy lifestyles.